



NEWS RELEASE

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Willetts Design and Associates, Inc. Plans for Success with Assistance from the SBDC

Indio, CA – Dorothy Willetts and Leayne Johnson started their own interior design business only after a great deal of research and planning. “We met with anyone we could think of,” Johnson said, adding they sought advice from lawyers, accountants, small business owners and Brad Mix, consultant with the Coachella Valley Small Business Development Center. Both women moved to the desert in 1998 and began working at Rancho La Quinta a month apart. Their decision to start Willetts Johnson Interior Design came at a time when their employer, Rancho La Quinta Country Club was nearly built out. “We researched everything, and decided it was time,” said Johnson.

Willetts Johnson Interior Design opened in May 2004 and designs everything, including floors, built-ins, electrical and plumbing fixtures and bedding. “We’re a high-end residential design firm with the majority of clients in the desert area. We’ll do turnkey, everything in the house,” said Johnson. They’ve built business on referrals and credit their growth and success to professionalism and honesty. She added, “Our focus now is on growth”. Their expansion plans include, but aren’t limited to the Beach cities, Phoenix, and Las Vegas.

When asked about “lessons learned” they mentioned several key points:

- Keep your overhead low
- Have a marketing plan in place at the outset and follow it
- Use a business plan and update it as your business develops.

Mix helped them develop their business plan and marketing strategy. The SBDC is partially funded by the U.S. Small Business Administration to deliver management and technical assistance to prospective and current small business owners. For more information or to make an appointment for no-cost business counseling call (760) 864-1311. For information on SBA’s programs and services contact the Santa Ana District Office at (714) 550-7420 or visit their website at www.sba.gov/ca/santa.

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